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International Meeting to Review the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States

Port Louis, Mauritius
10-14 January 2005

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Agenda item 8
Comprehensive review of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States

Summaries of panel discussions

Note by the Secretariat

At its 1st plenary meeting, on 10 January 2005, the International Meeting to Review the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States adopted its organization of work and decided to convene five panel discussions from 10 to 12 January 2005. Summaries of the panel discussions will be issued as addenda to the present note.

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International Meeting to Review the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States

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Summaries of panel discussions

Note by the Secretariat

Addendum

Panel one
Environmental vulnerabilities of small island developing States (Monday, 10 January 2005, 3-6 p.m.)

Summary of discussion prepared by the Co-Chairpersons

1. Panel one addressed the topic of the environmental vulnerabilities facing small island developing States. The panel was co-chaired by Tagaloa Tuala Tagaloa, Minister of Natural Resources and Environment of Samoa, and Marian Hobbs, Minister for the Environment and Associate Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade (Official Development Assistance) of New Zealand. Klaus Töpfer, Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme, moderated the discussion. The four panellists were: Rajendra K. Pachauri, Chairman of the Inter-Governmental Panel on Climate Change; Theophilus Ferguson John, Minister for Physical Development, Environment and Housing of Saint Lucia; Salvano Briceño, Director of the Inter-Agency Secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction; and Kenrick Leslie, Director of the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre.

2. All panellists and speakers expressed their deepest sympathy to the Governments and people affected by the recent earthquake and tsunami in the Indian Ocean, which resulted in at least 160,000 deaths and widespread destruction of livelihoods and habitats in 13 countries on two continents. In this respect, a message from the President of Maldives, Maumoon Abdul Gayoom, was read to the meeting, calling for unity and global partnership to create mechanisms to deal with future environmental calamities (see annex).

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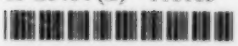

3. The panellists' presentations elicited an interactive dialogue with the Co-Chairs and more than 20 speakers from the floor, including representatives from both small island developing States and non-small island developing States Governments, organizations and civil society. The panel's recommendations are being presented to the high-level round tables to stimulate the intergovernmental dialogue on practical measures to advance the small island developing States agenda, and will be included in the report of the International Meeting.

4. Discussion focused on assessing and strengthening the capacities of small island developing States to manage their environmental vulnerabilities and build their resilience in specific areas, including adaptation to climate change, preparedness and mitigation of natural disasters, promotion of integrated waste management strategies and the development of renewable energy sources. The issues raised and recommendations proposed can be grouped under three main headings, as set out below, along with actions for further consideration.

The environmental vulnerabilities of small island developing States

5. Though diverse in many respects, small island developing States share several common characteristics. Limited physical size, high population density, poor infrastructure and a lack of natural resources, especially freshwater resources, have not only geophysical but also economic and social impacts which are made worse by climate variability and extreme weather events. Coastal populations in all low-lying countries face the risks of sea-level rise, hurricanes, floods and tsunamis; however, in small island developing States these threats are magnified as there is little space or opportunity to relocate people affected or provide alternative livelihoods.

6. The unique features of island ecosystems, including fisheries, coral reefs and mangroves, also face increasing threats from climate changes, natural disasters and unplanned economic growth. This has potentially harmful implications for economic sectors, such as tourism and agriculture, as well as food security and nutrition. A special concern in the Caribbean is the threat of underwater volcanoes in the vicinity of Grenada, as well as the fact that six months of the year the region is susceptible to hurricanes.

7. Many small island developing States are also especially vulnerable to the risk of oil spills because of their proximity to shipping routes carrying large oil tankers and other vessels. Cape Verde and the Comoros, in particular, highlight this problem. Cruise ship discharges are also a threat to beaches and coastal areas as well as fragile ecosystems and coral reefs.

Adapting to vulnerability

8. Many participants emphasized that the vulnerability of small island developing States is not just an environmental issue but has immense social and economic implications, as exemplified by the devastating consequences of many natural disasters that have occurred in the developing world, including the latest tsunami in East Asia. By the same token, the threat of climate change is not only geophysical but also poses grave risks to the social and economic viability of small island developing States.

9. Adaptation to environmental vulnerability and climate change is vital but will force difficult choices and tradeoffs in policy-making, involving, for example, further intensive coastal development or its possible limitation or restriction. In some small island developing States, there is no hinterland and the coast cannot be avoided. The choice is limited to remaining on the island/atoll or not.

10. Even as natural hazards are on the rise, vulnerability is also increasing due to higher poverty levels, unplanned urbanization and environmental degradation. As one speaker observed, "natural hazards are inevitable, but disasters are not". Issues of deforestation and land use in exposing small island developing States to greater natural hazard risks should be considered.

11. The importance of disaster risk-reduction strategies was highlighted. The need to move from post-disaster reaction to building the capacity for prevention was emphasized. A number of participants called for the establishment of early warning and information systems, including at regional and subregional levels. The need for setting up regional climate observation systems to better enable monitoring of climate variations was also mentioned. It was noted that the tsunami that struck East Asia has united the world and created a political momentum that should be used to further expand international cooperation for the development of early warning and information systems within the context of broader disaster prevention efforts. But any such system must be sensitive enough to meet the needs of small States, especially small island developing States.

12. The importance of conserving biodiversity was highlighted. Natural resources accounting systems should be developed, with the assistance of the United Nations system, to address the economic, social and environmental values of ecosystems in an integrated manner.

13. Many participants stressed the importance of partnerships for sharing experience and best practices, the development of technologies and the building of management capacities for vulnerability reduction and disaster management. Small island developing States need the assistance of the international community in building such partnerships and engaging in the development of technologies.

Reducing vulnerability by harnessing renewable energy

14. It was noted that many small island developing States are heavily reliant on imported fossil fuels and that there is a need to develop a range of energy options. There is significant potential for small island developing States to expand the use of renewable energy, selecting those sources that are suited to circumstances of the States concerned. It was also noted that in developing energy options, the limited markets of small island developing States need to be taken into consideration.

15. While a range of renewable energy technologies have been adopted by some small island developing States, further action is required with respect to establishing appropriate and supportive regulatory frameworks and to facilitate the transfer of technology. It was noted that traditional attitudes in the use of energy are a barrier to be overcome in the introduction of renewable energy technologies in small island developing States.

16. Though the share of renewable energy in the overall energy production has increased in many small island developing States, there is still a need to mobilize political support for their further development as an important means of reducing

greenhouse gas emissions and harnessing the potential of natural resources for energy production and the reduction of the high cost of importing energy/fuel. The importance of partnerships between small island developing States in the area of renewable energy was highlighted, as was the scope for cooperation and partnerships in the development of renewable energy technology and the building of the relevant financial, human and institutional capacity of small island developing States.

17. A number of examples were given of renewable energy technologies adopted in small island developing States. In Mauritius, the use of bagasse, long employed by the sugar industry for co-generation, has been expanded to co-fire coal power plants, displacing the use of fossil fuel. The Government of Barbados created incentives to successfully promote the installation of solar hot water systems.

Recommended actions for further consideration

18. Panel one recommends the following actions for further consideration:

- Establish and/or strengthen regional and subregional early warning and information systems.
- Harness the potential of renewable energy as a source of reducing greenhouse gases and meeting the increasing energy demands of small island developing States in a more sustainable manner.
- Build the human, technical and managerial capacities of small island developing States for disaster reduction and prevention, including through international cooperation and partnerships.
- Commit to linking humanitarian and disaster reduction efforts and resources.
- Give special attention to the vulnerability of small island developing States in the upcoming World Conference on Disaster Reduction, to be held in Kobe, Japan, from 18 to 20 January 2005.
- Address the specific needs of small island developing States in the area of vulnerability and natural disasters in order to achieve the goals and targets of the Millennium Development Goals and the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development.
- Integrate disaster-reduction issues into the decisions of the Commission on Sustainable Development at its thirteenth session on water, sanitation and human settlements.

Annex

Message to panel one of the International Meeting dated 10 January 2005 from the President of Maldives, Maumoon Abdul Gayoom

1. On 26 December 2004, we woke up to witness the terrible reality of our environmental fragility. The tsunami created by the Sumatra earthquake that morning swept through the entire archipelago of the Maldives with awesome fury, taking lives, devastating infrastructure, crippling our economy and washing away decades of hard work and toil of our people. This tsunami disaster was indeed, unprecedented — the worst natural calamity and the first of its kind ever experienced in the Maldives.

2. We have now embarked on the formidable tasks of providing emergency relief, rebuilding our lives and livelihoods and reconstructing our nation. These are daunting challenges indeed: 82 people are known to have died and 26 are still missing, and 13 islands had to be completely evacuated. Over 15,000 people have been left homeless and many people are facing food and water shortages. Our tourism and fishing industries have been crippled. Of the 87 resorts, 19 had to be closed. These resorts need major reconstruction to operate again. Many islands lost their fishing boats, ruining their primary livelihood asset. The total damage is estimated at well over one billion United States dollars. As our current focus is on relief and rehabilitation, we have not had the opportunity to asses the impact of the disaster on our fragile environment. The signs, however, are ominous. Our island vegetation is gradually dying as a result of the flooding and intrusion of salt water into the groundwater. This loss of vegetation would further increase the environmental vulnerability of our tiny islands. More importantly, according to scientists, the fresh groundwater reservoirs of our small islands may require several years of rain to recover, replenish and be drinkable.

3. The tsunami disaster is an opportunity for us to reflect on the fragility of small island States and other low-lying coastal areas. It is also a time to make important decisions to avert such catastrophes or minimize the losses of natural disasters in the future. On 26 December, the tsunami waves receded within hours. However, the waves and flooding from sea-level rise triggered by global warming will not recede. The damage then will be unspeakable and we will all become environmental refugees.

4. The Kyoto Protocol will enter into force on 16 February 2005, enabling us to enhance environmental cooperation and achieve targets established for the reduction of greenhouse gases. We need to do more towards the protection of our global environment. The Kyoto Protocol alone is not sufficient to deal with what is a bleak environmental future for our countries.

5. The tsunami disaster has united the world in a way we have not witnessed for a long time. This unity should be harnessed to create mechanisms to deal with future environmental calamities. The calamity has also shown that ecological catastrophes do not stop at national borders and that they are more damaging to small island States. Thirteen countries on two continents were directly affected by the tsunami, and a number of other nations lost their citizens in the disaster.

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Note by the Secretariat

Addendum

Panel two
Special challenges facing small island developing States in trade and economic development
(Tuesday, 11 January 2005, 10 a.m.-1 p.m.)

Summary of discussion prepared by the Chairperson

1. Panel two addressed the topic of the special challenges facing small island developing States in trade and economic development. The panel was chaired by Jaya Krishna Cuttaree, Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Regional Cooperation of Mauritius. Habib Ouane, Director of the Special Programme on the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), was the moderator. The five panellists were Anthony Severin, Ambassador Plenipotentiary and Extraordinary in the Office of the Prime Minister of Saint Lucia and Saint Lucia's Ambassador to the Caribbean Community; Mohamed Latheef, Permanent Representative of Maldives to the United Nations; Hans-Peter Werner, Counsellor, Development Division of the World Trade Organization (WTO); Sivaramen Palayathan, Trade Adviser, Permanent Mission of Mauritius to WTO; and Deep Ford, Senior Trade Adviser, Commodities and Trade Division of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

2. The panellists' presentations were followed by an interactive debate. The panel's recommendations are being presented to the high-level round tables to stimulate the intergovernmental dialogue on concrete measures to advance the small island developing States agenda, and will be included in the report of the International Meeting.

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3. The panel covered three main topics, including economic, vulnerability, trade issues as they relate to small island developing States and the institutional responses to address these challenges. The panel recommended actions for further consideration.

Economic vulnerability issues

4. Small island developing States have open, small-scale economies with limited resources, and are highly dependent on external markets and resources. In addition, they suffer from many structural and competitive disadvantages. Most small island developing States specialize in a narrow range of products and have a limited domestic market. Several are single commodity exporters and rely heavily on export earnings. This external dependence increases their vulnerability to external economic threats and shocks. There was an urgent call by participants for action to avoid further marginalization of small island developing States.

5. It was noted that issues of diseconomies of scale are directly related to high-unit costs of producing goods and services, which result in non-competitive prices. This is exacerbated by high transportation costs due to the geographical remoteness of small island developing States. In addition, small island developing States commonly have difficulties to access capital, including from multilateral financial institutions. Globalization has further marginalized small island developing States in the global market.

6. Several speakers emphasized that the current rule for graduation from least developed country status, an issue of critical importance to small island developing States, requires re-examination. Small island developing States that would graduate from least developed country status would become, in a relatively short time, ineligible for concessionary or preferential treatment, which would severely restrict their ability to recover, for example, from natural disasters and economic shocks to which they are particularly vulnerable. This issue was illustrated by the example of Maldives, which recently faced the consequences of a tsunami disaster. Special support measures would be necessary to allow small island developing States to adapt to the circumstances that would follow graduation.

Trade-related issues

7. Participants noted that consideration of small island developing States is a relatively new feature in international trade negotiations. It was stressed that the rule-based multilateral trading system ought to take into consideration the special economic disadvantages of small island developing States. The latter are often weak trading partners and face serious difficulties in competing in international trade. The European Union trading system was cited as a successful model with regard to granting special and differential treatment to weaker and smaller economies. This has allowed such countries as Greece and Portugal to make structural adjustment to the global economy and fully integrate into the multilateral trading system.

8. Future trade negotiations should make the multilateral trading system more equitable through recognition of the particular disadvantages of small island developing States. This would allow small island developing States to engage on a more equal footing in international trade, gain more secure access to external markets and participate as equal partners in WTO negotiations. Mauritius illustrated the need for a preferential and differentiated treatment of small island developing

States that export commodities. The example of the recent EU reform concerning sugar was cited. That reform brought down the prices of sugar by about 37 per cent, and could lead to the demise of the sugar sector in Mauritius.

9. It was noted that international trade negotiations in WTO are pursued under the Doha development agenda, which includes specific provisions concerning trade-related issues relevant to small and vulnerable economies. It was also noted that negotiations, particularly those relating to the preferential treatment of small island developing States, access to markets and agricultural subsidies, have not advanced in the manner that was hoped for at the time of the adoption of the Doha ministerial declaration in 2001.

Institutional responses to relevant issues

10. Participants generally took the view that small island developing States will not be able to build economic resilience and competitive economies without the support of their development partners. Increased aid flows from bilateral development partners and multilateral financial institutions are essential for enhancing resilience capacities. There is also a need to intensify economic cooperation within small island developing States regions, including through the pooling of resources. United Nations agencies should continue to help in this regard.

11. Institutional capacity-building is of critical importance to small island developing States. Several small island developing States have made strides in developing their capacity to trade, but economic vulnerabilities remain high and special efforts should be made by the international community to strengthen the resilience of these countries. It is important to identify practical ways for capacity-building and regional approaches and strategies for supporting the economic development of small island developing States, with the assistance of international development partners.

12. The complexity of trade negotiations and the related challenges faced by small island developing States justify the efforts to develop the negotiating capacities of small island developing States. They also imply innovative approaches on the part of small island developing States. It was noted that the fear that a special treatment of small island developing States might undermine the multilateral trading system was unfounded.

Recommended actions for further consideration

- Assist small island developing States in enhancing their competitiveness in international markets.
- Ensure that the rule-based multilateral trading system properly takes into consideration the economic vulnerabilities of small island developing States.
- Implement the provisions of the Doha ministerial declaration that are relevant to the differential and preferential treatment of small island developing States, particularly those regarding access to external markets.
- Set up innovative financial mechanisms to respond to the structural disadvantages of small island developing States.
- Improve the capacity of small island developing States to effectively participate in WTO negotiations.

- Strengthen the institutional capacities of small island developing States, including their capacity to develop trade-related policies and relevant regulatory measures.
- Make success stories of small island developing States in economic development and capacity-building available for learning purposes.
- Strengthen South-South cooperation relevant to small island developing States through regional entities, with the support of developed countries and international organizations.
- Re-examine the rule for graduation from least developed country status in the light of the special vulnerabilities of small island developing States.
- Increase the scope for acceptance of small island developing States as a case for special treatment in WTO.
- Invite relevant United Nations bodies to give the United Nations list of small island developing States formal status for the purposes of special treatment.

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Note by the Secretariat

Addendum

Panel three
Role of culture in the sustainable development of small island developing States
(Tuesday, 11 January 2005, 3-5 p.m.)

Summary of discussion prepared by the Chairperson

1. Plenary panel three discussed the role of culture in the sustainable development of small island developing States. The Panel was chaired by Rachmat Witoelar, State Minister for Environment of Indonesia, and moderated by Dame Pearlette Louisy, Governor-General of Saint Lucia. To facilitate the intergovernmental dialogue, the Panel began with a number of presentations: Philippe de la Hausse de Lalouvière, Chairperson of the National Heritage Fund Board of Mauritius, spoke on the theme "Integrating cultural heritage into sustainable development in small island developing States"; Adi Meretui Ratunabuabua, Principal Cultural Development Officer, Department of Culture and Heritage at the Ministry of Fijian Affairs, discussed the theme "How to safeguard, enhance and promote small islands' tangible and intangible cultural heritage"; Ralph Regenvanu, Director of the Vanuatu Cultural Centre, talked about the theme "Community management of cultural heritage, resources and education"; Keith Nurse, Senior Lecturer at the Institute of International Relations, University of the West Indies, Trinidad and Tobago, spoke on the theme "The cultural industries and sustainable development in small island developing States"; and Sidney Bartley, Director of Culture at the Ministry of Education, Youth and Culture of Jamaica, covered the theme "Aligning culture with trade and other public policies for sustainable development".

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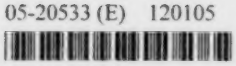

2. There was general agreement that culture has emerged as a key issue in the follow-up to the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States and sustainable development in general. Culture was in fact identified as the fourth pillar of sustainable development. It was recognized that island culture and heritage provide important pathways to sustainable development through such things as sustainable tourism, traditional knowledge, music and festivals. Cultural identity and cultural heritage are fundamental in advancing sustainable development in small island developing States; indeed, development can only be truly sustainable if it is based on and grows out of cultural identity.

3. There was broad support among delegations for a new international convention on cultural diversity. It was noted that cultural exchanges nourish and develop cultural diversity and cultural identity; they also combat misunderstanding and prevent extremism.

4. Many delegations supported the protection of cultural heritage and cultural diversity, and additional resources for the strengthening of national and regional initiatives that have this aim. A number of delegations and major groups called for the preservation of indigenous and local languages and the teaching of culture and traditions in national education systems. Moreover, it was felt that small island developing States need to influence the content of broadcast media so that positive images of small island developing States cultures are portrayed. It was noted that the transmission of cultural traditions to youth helps build a resilient society.

5. Some delegations called for national cultural policies and legislative frameworks to support the development of cultural industries and initiatives in such areas as music, art, festivals, theatre, film and cultural tourism. Viable commercial cultural industries can nurture social cohesion and reinforce national identity. There is a need to strengthen cultural institutions and industries in small island developing States for national and regional development and to achieve international competitiveness. Such institutions and industries are viewed as areas in which small island developing States have a comparative advantage and which can be used to build up social and economic resilience. Culture is a major source of protection for small island developing States to absorb the external shocks of globalization.

6. Participants identified the following areas for priority for action:

- Involve communities in policy-making to safeguard their cultural heritage, including identifying what deserves protection and who owns it.
- Improve the management of cultural and natural heritage sites and ensure the accessibility of such heritage to all and its cost-effective maintenance.
- Develop partnerships between Governments and civil society for sustainable heritage management.
- Support and strengthen community capacities in resource management and governance.
- Develop programmes to record traditional knowledge and preserve customary cultural values, traditions and practices.
- Teach and transmit traditional community values and associated local and indigenous knowledge in basic education.

- Record and document indigenous languages as a means to support their systematic incorporation into school curricula and encourage publishing in indigenous languages.
- Build capacities in cultural areas through education and training in the arts, arts administration, heritage management and cultural entrepreneurship.
- Invest in cultural industries to generate new and indigenous forms of employment and exports, to aid in the diversification of economics, and to reinforce and expand cultural confidence and ties with overseas communities.
- Strengthen consultations between Governments and cultural industries in order to align government policy on culture and trade, industry, tourism, education, intellectual property protection and other sectors.
- Protect the intellectual property of small island developing States against piracy in the music, publishing and other creative industries, and build the capacity for rights management and patents, trademarks and copyright administration in small island developing States to protect all forms of creative innovation and raise public awareness of those issues.
- Improve institutional capacity for the advocacy, promotion and marketing of cultural products, services and intellectual property, including copyrights.
- Improve access to capital and credit, in particular in the areas of development financing and market development grants for small and medium-sized enterprises and the establishment of culture support funds in small island developing States regions.

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Note by the Secretariat

Addendum

Panel four
Addressing the emerging trends and social challenges for the sustainable development of small island developing States
(Tuesday, 11 January 2005, 5-7 p.m.)

Summary of discussion prepared by the Co-Chairpersons

1. Panel four addressed the topic of emerging trends and social challenges for the sustainable development of small island developing States. The panel was co-chaired by Marcus Bethel, Senator and Minister of Environment and Health of the Bahamas and Bruce Billson, Parliamentary Secretary, Foreign Affairs and Trade of Australia. Len Ishmael, Director General of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States, moderated the discussion. The four panellists were Greg Urwin, Secretary General of the Pacific Islands Forum; Sonia Elliott, Liaison Officer of the New York Office of the United Nations Joint Programme on HIV/AIDS, representing the Director of that Office, Desmond Johns; Curtis Ward, Adviser, Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee; and Rex Nettleford, Professor Emeritus, University of the West Indies.

2. The panellists' presentations elicited an interactive dialogue among representatives from Governments, organizations and civil society of both small island developing States, and other States. The panel's recommendations are being presented to the high-level round tables to stimulate the intergovernmental dialogue on practical measures to advance the small island developing States agenda, as part of the official report of the International Meeting.

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3. The panel discussion focused on a number of social challenges and emerging trends for the sustainable development of small island developing States. Participants emphasized that the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States is as relevant as ever in the context of those emerging trends.

4. Poverty alleviation continues to be a central challenge to the sustainable development of small island developing States even as progress is being made towards the goal to reduce by half the proportion of people living on less than $1 per day. Small island developing States have a high proportion of young people, are increasingly urbanized and are characterized by high population density relative to the availability of natural resources. Limited employment and tertiary education options, particularly for youth, continue to challenge small island developing States. The combination of high unemployment and urbanization is overwhelming service provision, and informal housing sectors and the incidence of real poverty are increasing.

5. Participants noted that the social impacts of globalization and trade liberalization are particularly apparent in small island developing States, as trade policies and tax regimes that do not take account of their special circumstances negatively affect the economy of local communities. Many small island developing States are facing the challenge of integrating local cultural norms and practices into governance frameworks and institutions inherited from the colonial period. International policies and regimes have forced many small island developing States to move from traditional resource economies to service economies. This change has had major transitional impacts on communities, labour and employment that should not be underestimated. Global markets do not accommodate social welfare, and small island developing States have had difficulty in providing adequate social safety nets. While local land ownership and access are fundamental to small island developing States' societies, global trading regimes make it increasingly difficult for them to restrict foreign ownership. In some cases, foreign direct investment, notably in the tourism sector, has increased the foreign ownership of land and further contributed to the erosion of community access to land ownership and natural resources. These factors compound the challenges faced by small island developing States in ensuring self-sufficiency and self-determination.

6. Short-sighted development plans that are not designed to protect the environment and natural resource base can also compromise the ability of small island developing States to protect the health and welfare of their communities. Small island developing States need to concentrate on developing niche markets. People, rather than the private sector, will be the engine of growth for small island developing States if they are adequately supported and resourced. The Governments of small island developing States should reflect this in policies and programmes, in a way that promotes the unique cultural assets of their communities and draws on self-determined needs rather than those imposed from the outside.

7. While HIV/AIDS is not an emerging trend, it was inadequately recognized as a development challenge 10 years ago. Nonetheless, HIV/AIDS is a grave and growing threat which is compounded by the frequent movement of people and persistent cultural taboos on the open discussion of sexual practices. HIV/AIDS is more than just a health concern; its impacts are all-pervasive and pose a continuing

development challenge. Lack of education and economic opportunities contributes to poor health behaviour and choices.

8. HIV/AIDS increasingly threatens the productive workforce of small island developing States and places further strains on already stretched health services. The younger, urban and most economically active age group is especially hard hit, with young women at particular risk. The Caribbean is the second-worst-affected region in the world. Vulnerability increases with a culture of denial, lack of access to health services and education, and high levels of poverty. Strong political commitment and leadership, coupled with a well-defined planning and delivery system, are critical. Solutions need to be targeted within national, regional and cultural contexts and properly funded.

9. HIV/AIDS is not the only major health issue facing small island developing States. Other chronic diseases and health conditions, such as diabetes, obesity, tuberculosis and malaria, are also of major concern and require similarly coordinated and integrated solutions.

10. Post-11 September 2001, the need to combat terrorism and the financing of terrorism has placed new demands on law enforcement institutions, resources and infrastructure. While small island developing States are willing partners in the international effort to improve global security and address terrorism, they face an uphill struggle to prioritize these issues over other pressing issues such as poverty alleviation, environmental degradation, natural disasters, disease pandemics and heavy debt burdens. The costs of not tackling internal and external security concerns are high in terms of the impact on financial, human and institutional resources. However, small island developing States are incurring further debts in their efforts to address security and terrorism issues, in particular with regard to the implementation of the United Nations resolution on security. There is an urgent need for capacity-building to ensure that small island developing States can address security needs without compromising their other development imperatives. This points to a need for institutionalized frameworks for cooperation and coordination among States to build capacity for national and global security. Participants noted that consideration should be given to a trust fund for global security, which could be established through the World Bank and administered through regional development banks.

11. Besides terrorism, other transnational crimes pose a significant challenge for small island developing States. They are particularly vulnerable as target locations for the conduct of transnational crime, including trafficking in people and drugs. Such crimes have a destabilizing effect on communities, affecting tourist economies and undermining governance.

12. Efforts for strengthening regional cooperation have increasingly proved useful in harmonizing frameworks for more integrated governance. Small island developing States are moving towards alliances, pooling resources and investing in regional infrastructure in an attempt to overcome many of their disadvantages, including limited economies of scale and the high costs associated with geographic isolation.

Possible actions for further consideration

13. Small island developing States have been working to integrate the Millennium Development Goals into their planning and development processes. People-centred, participatory approaches to development, particularly representation by women at all levels of governance, continue to be essential to the sustainable development of small island developing States. The 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami reinforced the importance of long-term sustainable development approaches that are based on real partnerships and mutual respect, rather than short-term handouts. The panel highlighted the following elements as possible actions for further consideration:

- Provide more international support, in partnerships with the United Nations Joint Programme on HIV/AIDS, for programmes to combat HIV/AIDS
- Establish a trust fund for global security to be administered by the World Bank and regional development banks
- Strengthen community involvement in decision-making, planning and programme development, particularly on the part of women and youth
- Improve employment and education opportunities for the poor and disenfranchised to ensure economic and social sustainability and to create intellectual capital
- Call on Governments of small island developing States to ensure equitable distribution of income, job creation and job maintenance and to ensure the protection of workers' rights by ratifying the core International Labour Organization conventions
- Build institutional capacity to train local people so that they can develop niche markets in small island developing States, which will also help to retain jobs and support retirement options in the long term
- Take a more integrated approach to policies and programmes to address the many health issues, recognizing the broader implications for economic productivity and social cohesion
- Develop national plans of implementation to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and undertake a gender impact assessment of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States
- Establish an early warning system to monitor food security

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Agenda item 8
Comprehensive review of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States

Summaries of panel discussions

Note by the Secretariat

Addendum

Panel five
Resilience-building in small island developing States (Wednesday, 12 January 2005, 10 a.m.-1 p.m.)

Summary of discussions prepared by the Chairperson

1. Panel five addressed the topic of resilience-building in small island developing States. The panel was chaired by Maria Madalena Brito Neves, Minister of Environment, Agriculture and Fisheries of Cape Verde. Professor Albert Binger, Director of the Centre for Environment and Development, University of the West Indies, Coordinator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) expert group on small island developing States and member of the Committee on Development Policy, moderated the discussion. The four panellists were Toke Talagi, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Environment of Niue; Professor Michael Witter of the University of the West Indies and a member of the UNDP expert group on small island developing States; Teresa Manarangi-Trott, private consultant from the Cook Islands; and Siv Jensen, Chairman of the Finance Committee in the Norwegian Parliament.

2. The panellists' presentations, along with comments and questions from the Chairperson, the Moderator and from the floor, including representatives of Governments, organizations and civil society, discussed resilience-building in small island developing States from the perspective of their common elements of vulnerability, as well as some recent catastrophic weather events, and ongoing and proposed measures to deal with the serious and often long-term consequences for individual countries. The views of a major donor country regarding its foreign assistance priorities stimulated further discussion. The panel's recommendations are

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being presented to the high-level round tables to promote intergovernmental dialogue on practical measures to advance the small island developing States agenda, and will be included in the report of the International Meeting.

3. The issues raised in the panel discussion and the recommendations proposed can be grouped under three headings, as set out below.

Elements of vulnerability

4. The panellists highlighted a number of key elements of vulnerability common to all of them, namely: smallness (of size and of population, limiting human resources and internal markets); remoteness (from markets, adding to transportation costs); reliance on energy imports (energy vulnerability); geographical dispersion; vulnerability to natural disasters and extreme weather events; fragile ecosystems (especially coral reefs and coastal areas); constraints on information and communication technology; vulnerability to exogenous economic and financial shocks; lack of natural resources (especially limited freshwater supplies, fuel sources and agricultural/food products); and high levels of migration of skilled personnel (see also A/CONF.207/CRP.5).

5. Although rejecting the "one-size-fits-all" description of small island developing States, the panellists stressed that their limited natural, economic and human capital was a common constraint affecting their ability to absorb and respond to external shocks, whether man-made, such as from market/financial forces, or shocks resulting from natural hazards, such as those caused by extreme weather events. The recent tragic earthquake and tsunami in the Indian Ocean was referred to as the most recent and destructive example of the impact of natural disasters.

Building resilience: lessons learned

6. The experience of Niue was discussed by the panel as a case of major economic and environmental devastation caused in January 2004 by cyclone Heta, the largest cyclone ever recorded in the Pacific. One year later, lessons learned in building resilience included the importance of communications — to get the facts of the disaster out quickly and correctly and to mobilize media and donor support. It was also important to pre-position relief supplies and emergency assistance. The prior planning of infrastructure and public utilities helped to facilitate speedy rehabilitation. Effective decision-making and management by government, at all levels, including setting priorities and getting the message to the people and local grass-roots and civil society organizations, was essential. Simultaneous long-term planning in post-cyclone recovery efforts and understanding the role that culture played in building resilience, through community-based and traditional psychological counselling, helped a devastated population overcome the trauma of destruction to their land, resources and livelihoods and to move forward to a long-term recovery.

7. Other panellists spoke of similar experiences of devastation and vulnerability after hurricane Ivan hit the Caribbean in 2004. The destruction caused was greatly exacerbated by years of environmental damage due to human activities, such as deforestation and beach and coastal erosion, often caused by the concentration of tourist facilities on fragile coasts. It was stressed that short-term economic gains from building hotels might ultimately be overtaken by the costs of long-term environmental damage to land and marine resources and related biodiversity.

8. One conclusion suggested was that the smallness of small island developing States required more of an inclusive, integrated approach to development, rather than the traditional sectoral approach to achieve sustainable development and "ecosystem resilience". Capacity-building, including human resources development and management, good governance and public participation, including private and local sectors, were essential for resilience-building and sustainable development.

9. An important consideration mentioned by one panellist was that, as much as "one-size-fits-all" did not describe the physical characteristics of all small island developing States, that concept might also not be relevant for donors in considering financial assistance and trade preferences, which were determined more by individual requirements and needs. The diversity among small island developing States highlighted the need to tailor specific remedies for each country. Economic and trade diversification could be crucial, and donor commitments to investment in economic diversification could be essential.

Suggestions for further action

10. Resilience-building in small island developing States requires attention to:

- Means of recovery from natural environmental disasters and external economic shocks
- Innovative modalities for mobilizing resources and financing for development
- Mechanisms for evaluation and follow-up
- Sustainable solutions to energy concerns
- New information and communications technologies
- Partnerships among Governments, civil society, the private sector and the international community
- Establishment and/or strengthening of early warning systems
- National security

11. Governments of small island developing States can and should take steps to:

- Integrate economic, environmental, social, and cultural considerations into disaster-management plans
- Diversify trade activities and develop strategies for coping with economic instability
- Manage in an inclusive and integrated way the environmental resources that sustain the economies of small island developing States
- Include civil society in the formulation and implementation of public policy in meaningful ways to strengthen capacity for resilience

12. Major groups and civil society play an important role in resilience-building by:

- Increasing capacity through training, education and research
- Developing global information-sharing systems
- Raising awareness on indigenous issues

13. The international community and development partners can support small island developing States in building resilience and achieving sustainable development by:

- Rapid mobilization of resources for disaster relief and reconstruction
- Strengthening capacities of small island developing States to work at the regional and subregional levels
- Supporting and improving strategies to develop collaborative partnerships
- Revising the use of GDI/GDP as criteria when considering small island developing States economies within the framework of financing for development
- Funding scientific research and community-based initiatives for sustainable development in small island developing States

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Summaries of round tables

Note by the Secretariat

At its 1st plenary meeting, on 10 January 2005, the International Meeting to Review the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States adopted its organization of work and decided to convene two round tables during its high-level segment, on 13 and 14 January 2005. Summaries of the round tables will be issued as addenda to the present note.

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Round table one
The way forward: mobilizing resources for the further implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States

(Thursday, 13 January 2005, 3-6 p.m.)

Summary of discussions prepared by the Co-Chairpersons

1. Round table one addressed the topic "The way forward: mobilizing resources for the further implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States". The Panel was co-chaired by Owen Arthur, Prime Minister of Barbados, and Louis Michel, European Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Affairs. The Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat moderated the discussion.

2. Twenty-five speakers, including presidents, prime ministers, ministers and senior officials of Governments, as well as heads of agencies and organizations and representatives of civil society, participated in the round-table discussions. Co-Chairman Arthur opened the meeting with an introductory statement and Co-Chairman Michel made concluding remarks. The present summary will be included as part of the official report of the International Meeting.

3. The round-table dialogue focused on key policy issues and measures that are considered critical to the mobilization of resources needed for the successful implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States. The round table also considered other recent goals and commitments, including those contained in the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, the Monterrey Consensus adopted by the International Conference on Financing for Development and the United Nations Millennium Declaration.

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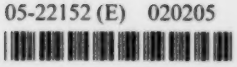

4. In general, participants were of the view that it was the primary responsibility of individual States, themselves, to implement the Programme of Action and other development strategies. However, the limited access of small island developing States to financial and technical resources required assistance from the international community. They noted with concern that, 10 years after the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, held in Barbados, implementation of its commitments had fallen far short of expectations, largely due to insufficient levels of financial support. This resource gap has exacerbated the implementation gap. The ecological, economic and social vulnerabilities of small island developing States and their lack of resilience to external shocks — whether caused by financial markets and globalization or by extreme weather events and natural disasters, such as the recent catastrophic earthquake and tsunami in the Indian Ocean or cyclone Heta in the Pacific and hurricane Ivan in the Caribbean — magnified the lack of capacity of most small island developing States to mobilize the necessary funding and technical expertise required to fully implement the Programme of Action.

5. Official development assistance flows to small island developing States have decreased dramatically since the adoption of the Programme of Action in 1994, in some cases by up to 50 per cent. At the same time, trade by small island developing States in international markets has decreased, resulting in extreme losses in their export earnings. It was noted that agricultural subsidies and military expenditures of developed countries amount to significantly more than the total ODA of all developing countries. Remittance flows from small island developing States citizens abroad, though an important and growing portion of external finance to many small island developing States, is restricted to the immigration policies of some developed countries.

6. It was noted that international capital markets can be an important source of external finance but are in many cases not effectively utilized by small island developing States because of inadequate understanding of how these markets work or lack of capacity to take full advantage of such markets. In order to access these markets, small island developing States must develop and exercise the financial discipline imposed by these markets. It was noted that foreign direct investment (FDI) is often exclusively guided by commercial rates rather than the needs of the receiving countries. Referring to the high and increasing debt burden of many small island developing States, it was suggested that debt cancellation could be a way of investing in global peace.

7. Trade as a longer-term and more sustainable source of resource mobilization was also highlighted. However, most small island developing States are too small to be competitive in international markets and require support in enhancing their competitiveness. Moreover, their share of global trade is too small for the failure of their economies to have any significant impact on the global economic system. Due to their remoteness and small markets, many small island developing States have great difficulties in attracting external financial resources, including from international financial institutions. It was urged that the rule-based multilateral trading system take into consideration the economic vulnerabilities of small island developing States and increase the scope for acceptance of small island developing States as a case for special treatment in the World Trade Organization and the ongoing Doha round of international trade negotiations. It was also mentioned that graduation of small island developing States from least developed country status

could lead to the erosion of market access preferences accompanying graduation, and that therefore that practice should be discouraged.

8. Many participants addressed the need for establishing an enabling domestic environment in small island developing States, including a business climate conducive to entrepreneurship and enterprise development. In most small island developing States, the private sector is underdeveloped and enterprises are not competitive. It was, in particular, noted that incentives for enterprise development, including access to finance on concessional terms, are insufficient to effectively stimulate the development and growth of such enterprises. Improving access to capital and credit, in particular, providing development financing and market development grants for small enterprises, accompanied by appropriate laws and regulatory instruments and infrastructure, could improve the situation.

9. Governments have an important responsibility to assist enterprise development and entrepreneurship, inter alia, through public and private partnerships, capacity-building and leading society into the new information age. Providing assistance to enterprises in economic sectors where small island developing States have competitive advantage, such as the tourist sector and cultural industries, could improve competitiveness of enterprise operations in these sectors. Funds should be made available for eco-tourism and mainstreaming the informal sector into the formal economy.

10. Many participants highlighted the critical importance of human resources development through education, training and capacity-building. Equality between women and men in education and training must be achieved to allow equal access to employment and career development. Several participants called for the establishment of multidisciplinary centres of excellence, including at the regional level, to take full advantage of the social capital available in small island developing States. Such centres could, inter alia, maintain a database on human resources and expertise available in small island developing States.

11. Many participants called for enhanced cooperation among small island developing States to maximize and better harness scarce resources. Regional and subregional cooperation is essential to success in natural disaster prevention and early warning. Regional organizations should support such efforts.

Recommended actions for further consideration

12. To overcome the challenges inherent in mobilizing resources for the implementation of the Programme of Action, participants in the round table recommended that attention be given to the following:

(a) At the international level:

- Focus on trade as a longer-term source for resource mobilization and assist small island developing States in opening their markets while maintaining their special status
- Examine immigration issues, which are tied to aid flows and trade, including free flows of goods and services in open markets
- Reform the insurance sector so that it can respond effectively to the unique circumstances of small island developing States following natural disasters,

including new ways of underwriting catastrophic risks, particularly those experienced in small island developing States

- Focus on partnerships for sustainable development, recognizing the role of the private sector
- Facilitate the promotion of cultural agents and their products, and ensure that small island developing States reap the benefits of their contributions to the global cultural industry
- Take measures to mitigate climate change, including ratification of the Kyoto Protocol
- Meet the agreed international ODA target of 0.7 per cent of gross domestic product
- Create a global trust fund for small island developing States that would include private and voluntary contributions
- Foster cooperation among small island developing States countries in the sharing of experience and lessons learned
- Consider cancellation of debt in the most heavily indebted countries

(b) At the regional level:

- Create regional multidisciplinary centres of excellence to provide access to capital, foster capacity-building, enable technology transfer and prevent brain drain
- Strengthen regional efforts to coordinate financing and pool regional expertise

(c) At the national level:

- Focus on the development of social capital and human resources
- Create enabling conditions which make entrepreneurship attractive and viable, including:
  - Creation of sound education policy
  - Provision of education and training
  - Support for research
  - Access to capital
  - Development of sound infrastructure in such sectors as transportation and health
- Create legal frameworks that support such enabling conditions and environments
- Continue to develop approaches that include stakeholder consultations and support national sustainable development strategies
- Increase political will to enable and strengthen local partnerships among communities, the private sector and government
- Focus on procedures to integrate, coordinate and maximize use of resources in tourism, agricultural and other service sectors
- Revisit tax schemes so that they foster development that sustains investment in systems that can create additional resources

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Round table two
The way forward: building capacity for the sustainable development of small island developing States

(Friday, 14 January 2005, 10 a.m.-1 p.m.)

Summary of discussions prepared by the Co-Chairpersons

1. Round table two addressed the topic "The way forward: building capacity for the sustainable development of small island developing States". The round table was co-chaired by Kessai H. Note, President of the Marshall Islands and Jacob Zuma, Deputy President of South Africa. Leonard Good, Chief Executive Officer and Chairman of the Global Environment Facility, moderated the interactive discussion.

2. The present summary will be included as part of the official report of the International Meeting.

3. The round-table dialogue focused on the key environmental, economic and social vulnerabilities of the small island developing States and discussed the capacity-building efforts needed to address those vulnerabilities.

4. In the light of the recent earthquake and tsunami affecting the Indian Ocean region, many delegations stressed the environmental vulnerabilities of small island developing States, in particular to natural disasters, adverse impacts of climate change, fragile water supplies, inadequate sanitation and waste management. The adverse effects of climate change and sea-level rise present significant risks to the sustainable development of small island developing States and the long-term effects of climate change may threaten the very existence of some small island developing States.

5. Many participants acknowledged a growing concern for the social vulnerabilities that confront small island developing States. In recent years, the importance of social development issues has been embraced by small island developing States, notably issues relating to health, preservation of indigenous

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culture, gender equality and education. These were underpinned by broad concerns regarding poverty as a root cause of a range of social stresses.

6. Culture has emerged as an important issue in the follow-up to the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States. Some of the issues are the protection of cultural heritage and cultural diversity, the preservation of indigenous languages, strengthening of cultural industries, and the protection and conservation of traditional knowledge.

7. In the area of health, HIV/AIDS is a grave and growing threat in small island developing States and is compounded by high levels of migration and persistent cultural taboos on the open discussion of sexual practices. Other chronic diseases and health conditions in small island developing States are diabetes, obesity, hypertension, tuberculosis and malaria.

8. Education to address the lack of technical and managerial capacity in most small island societies is one of the most critical cross-cutting factors limiting the ability of small island developing States to pursue sustainable development and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

9. It was mentioned that although small island developing States nationals send back considerable remittances to their home countries, such remittances can hardly compensate for the technical and intellectual capacity that has been lost. Such nationals could be encouraged to provide technical assistance and capacity-building, as well as to assist in the mobilization of external resources.

10. Participants in the round table identified a number of very specific recommendations for action with respect to capacity-building.

Action-oriented recommendations

11. The following recommendations were identified for strengthening environmental capacities:

(a) Mobilize external resources for capacity-building in environmental protection. For example, Italy announced the establishment of an international programme for environmental development to provide financing for training for environmental protection and sustainable development;

(b) Establish and build institutional capacities for regional and subregional early warning and information systems. Early warning systems are linked to the availability of information and communication technology (ICT), so capacity-building efforts for these two areas should be linked. This could also help to eliminate the digital divide;

(c) Increase efforts related to capacity-building to address the threat of climate change, including vulnerability assessment and adaptation planning;

(d) Strengthen and establish clearing houses for information on climate change and its adverse impacts on small island developing States so that they can better support the development of projects addressing climate change adaptation measures;

(e) Build capacity in small island developing States related to the formulation and implementation of clear development mechanism projects under the Kyoto Protocol;

(f) Create regional projects and programmes that utilize local human resources for biodiversity assessment, conservation and land-use planning;

(g) Provide support and capacity-building for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity of small island developing States, particularly with respect to coral reefs, fish stocks and establishment of biodiversity corridors on land, such as the Meso-American bio-Reef programme and the Meso-American biological corridor;

(h) Provide capacity-building assistance to small island developing States for the development and further implementation of freshwater and sanitation programmes, and the promotion of integrated water resources management;

(i) Assist communities by building skill sets in environmental conservation and management, since local communities, especially indigenous peoples, have strong spiritual linkages with the natural environment.

12. The following recommendations were identified for strengthening economic capacities:

(a) Strengthen the capacity of small island developing States to participate more effectively in intergovernmental negotiations, including those related to climate change, trade and fishing;

(b) Diversify the economic base of small island developing States to improve competitive advantage through capacity-building at the regional and international levels, inter alia, in ICT, science and technology, and development of cultural industries;

(c) Consider debt relief and even debt cancellation for the poorest countries;

(d) Strengthen regional and subregional approaches to capacity-building to overcome the lack of critical mass in small island developing States in such areas as social development, health, monetary policies, capital market development, trade negotiations and regional negotiation machinery, such as that implemented in the Caribbean Community (CARICOM);

(e) Enhance and further establish South-South cooperation, with the support of donors, so as to maximize the comparative advantages and best practices of developing countries. A number of countries expressed interest in providing training in specific areas where they have expertise, namely, Cuba, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Italy, Malaysia, the Republic of Korea and Singapore;

(f) Build small island developing States capacities for integrated planning processes related to responsible tourism that address such issues as tourism supply and demand, carrying capacity, resource utilization and economic, sociocultural and environmental impacts;

(g) Support capacity-building initiatives aimed at strengthening ICT literacy and skills development;

(h) Create subregional hubs for ICT among small island developing States. For example, India is building a cyber city to create a hub for ICT in Mauritius through South-South cooperation, and has established cooperative ICT programmes with 30 small island developing States;

(i) Support ICT networks, early warning systems, remote sensing, computer-based systems for mapping, and wireless technologies. A number of countries have highlighted new initiatives and ongoing efforts to advance capacity-building in these areas;

(j) Support and promote centres of excellence to build capacities in science and technology that also draw on traditional knowledge. It was noted that the Millennium Development Goals cannot be achieved without capacity-building in science and technology, in particular in the areas of renewable energy applications and ocean sciences;

(k) Build capacities at the national and regional levels to develop renewable energy and enhance energy efficiency;

(l) Support on-the-job training as an important aspect of continuous learning and adult education;

(m) Formalize relationships and mechanisms for partnerships to facilitate the participation of small island developing States experts of the diaspora interested in offering their skills for development in small island developing States.

13. The following recommendations were identified for strengthening social and human capacities:

(a) Provide international support for capacity-building and awareness-raising in order to combat HIV/AIDS, in partnership with the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS. One example was the Pan-Caribbean partnership in the fight against HIV/AIDS for resource mobilization and training. Similar regional programmes should be launched in other regional groupings of small island developing States;

(b) Build the capacities of both men and women to promote cultural industries based on indigenous arts, music, crafts and festivals, and to protect cultural heritage and local languages through educational curricula;

(c) Strengthen indigenous cultures and their communities to preserve traditional knowledge and as a guide to sustainable development. Civil society is an important partner in capacity-building for sustainable livelihoods, financing for development, climate change adaptation and resilience, integrated land and water planning, conserving unique island biodiversity and empowering communities to preserve traditional cultural heritage;

(d) Balance top-down educational approaches with community-based cultural heritage. For example, the University of the West Indies has a cultural studies institute for the protection of cultural heritage, culture management, cultural industries and creative arts;

(e) Support the proposed establishment of a consortium of tertiary institutions for capacity-development and education in small island developing States, including regional centres of excellence, technical development facilities for traditional knowledge and virtual universities;

(f) Invest in education, particularly for women and girls, as the best means of alleviating poverty and achieving sustainable development;

(g) Support education in those small island developing States where the capacity of teachers is low, educational materials are in short supply and access to ICT is almost non-existent;

(h) Promote distance-learning, including at the secondary and tertiary levels of education through ICT, in order to build needed capacity and as a means of combating brain drain;

(i) Build systemic, institutional and individual capacities for legislative, regulatory and policy development;

(j) Combat the problem of brain drain through the establishment of systems at the national level to provide incentives for experts to invest their skills at home;

(k) Support the development of non-governmental and civil society structures, and promote the sharing of expertise and lessons learned in support of the implementation of the Programme of Action and the mobilization of additional social and human resources;

(l) Build institutional and human resource capacity by working with indigenous cultures to foster traditional approaches to the implementation of the Programme of Action;

(m) Include women and girls in all educational and capacity-building efforts, including in building cultural industries;

(n) Provide capacity-building to ensure that small island developing States can address increased security demands without compromising their other development imperatives.

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Agenda item 7 (b)
Credentials of representatives to the International Meeting

Report of the Credentials Committee

Chairman: Anthony David **Edghill** (Trinidad and Tobago)

1. Rule 4 of the rules of procedure of the International Meeting to Review the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States provides as follows:

> "A Credentials Committee of nine members shall be appointed at the beginning of the International Meeting. Its composition shall be based on that of the Credentials Committee of the General Assembly of the United Nations at its fifty-ninth session. It shall examine the credentials of representatives and report to the International Meeting without delay."

2. At its first plenary meeting, on 10 January 2005, the International Meeting was informed that of the nine members which compose the Credentials Committee for the fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly of the United Nations, five countries, namely, Benin, Bhutan, Ghana, Liechtenstein and Uruguay, had indicated that they would not attend the International Meeting. The International Meeting decided that rule 51.2 of the rules of procedure would be suspended in order that the Credentials Committee be convoked with the following four members present: China, the Russian Federation, Trinidad and Tobago and the United States of America.

3. The Credentials Committee held one meeting, on 12 January 2005.

4. Anthony David Edghill (Trinidad and Tobago) was unanimously elected Chairman.

5. The Credentials Committee had before it a memorandum by the secretariat of the International Meeting, dated 12 January 2005, concerning the credentials of representatives of States and of the European Community to the International Meeting. The representative of the Legal Counsel of the United Nations made a statement relating to the memorandum by the secretariat of the International Meeting.

6. As noted in paragraph 1 of the memorandum and in the statement relating thereto, formal credentials of representatives to the International Meeting, in the

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form required by rule 3 of the rules of procedure of the International Meeting, had been received as at the time of the meeting of the Credentials Committee from the following 51 States and the European Community: Bahrain, Belize, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, China, Cook Islands, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Denmark, the Dominican Republic, Fiji, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, the Holy See, India, Kenya, Jamaica, Japan, Kiribati, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Morocco, Nauru, Norway, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Portugal, the Republic of Korea, Saint Lucia, Sao Tome and Principe, Seychelles, Singapore, South Africa, Spain, Switzerland, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

7. As noted in paragraph 2 of the memorandum and in the statement relating thereto, information concerning the appointment of the representatives of States to the International Meeting had been communicated to the secretariat of the International Meeting, as at the time of the meeting of the Credentials Committee, by means of a cable or a telefax from the Head of State or Government or the Minister for Foreign Affairs, or by means of a letter or note verbale from the ministries, embassies or permanent missions concerned, by the following 49 States: Antigua and Barbuda, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, the Bahamas, Barbados, Belgium, Canada, Chile, the Comoros, Cuba, Cyprus, Dominica, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Iceland, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Kuwait, Lebanon, Lithuania, Madagascar, Malta, the Marshall Islands, Mozambique, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Niue, Pakistan, the Philippines, Qatar, the Russian Federation, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Samoa, Senegal, Solomon Islands, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, the Sudan, Suriname, Timor-Leste, Tonga, Tuvalu, Ukraine, the United Republic of Tanzania, the United States of America, Vanuatu and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

8. The Chairman recommended that the Credentials Committee accept the credentials of the representatives of all States and of the European Community mentioned in the memorandum of the secretariat of the International Meeting, on the understanding that formal credentials for representatives of the States referred to in paragraph 6 above would be communicated to the secretariat of the International Meeting as soon as possible.

9. On the proposal of the Chairman, the Credentials Committee adopted the following draft resolution:

> "*The Credentials Committee*,
>
> "*Having examined* the credentials of the representatives to the International Meeting to Review the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States referred to in the memorandum of the secretariat of the International Meeting dated 12 January 2005,
>
> "*Accepts* the credentials of the representatives of the States and of the European Community referred to in the above-mentioned memorandum."

10. The draft resolution proposed by the Chairman was adopted without a vote.

11. The Chairman then proposed that the Credentials Committee recommend to the plenary of the International Meeting the adoption of a draft resolution (see para. 13 below). The proposal was adopted without a vote.

12. In the light of the foregoing, the present report is submitted to the International Meeting.

Recommendation of the Credentials Committee

13. The Credentials Committee recommends to the plenary of the International Meeting the adoption of the following draft resolution:

> **"Credentials of representatives to the International Meeting to Review the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States**
>
> "*The International Meeting to Review the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States*,
>
> "*Having considered* the report of the Credentials Committee and the recommendation contained therein,
>
> "*Approves* the report of the Credentials Committee."